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STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION OF EFFORTS TO STUDY, MITIGATE AND MINIMIZE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CHERNOBYL DISASTER

Letter dated 23 November 1992 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I should be grateful if you would take the necessary steps to circulate, as an official document of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 90, "Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster", the attached text of an appeal by Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and All Russia to the participants in the forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

ANNEX

Appeal by Aleksy II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, to the participants in the forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly

Six years have elapsed since the tragic day of the Chernobyl disaster. Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, whose destinies are currently undergoing a period of rapid change, have still not recovered from the wounds inflicted by the "peaceful" atom. Millions of people - those who lived and continue to live in the contaminated territories, those who fought the invisible enemy to protect their loved ones and those who, since birth, have borne the mark of the evil star whose name is called "Wormwood" (Revelation 8, 11) - continue to suffer as they wait for help.

My pastor's heart is filled with sorrow to see how little is being done for these people, how far we are from performing even the smallest part of our duty towards them. In a country where even the strong and healthy feel uncertain about the future, the lot of those who need special care is unbearably heavy.

When we called out in our misfortune, the response from the world was truly universal. I offer my heartfelt thanks for the prayers, the endeavours, the sacrifices through which people expressed their compassion for the victims of the Chernobyl disaster.

Yet the political, economic and social difficulties besetting the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States leave us no room to hope that the victims will receive the necessary attention in good time. But for many of them time has run out. The help which they need today may be useless tomorrow.

There are a multitude of problems which require urgent solutions. These include the need for accurate and timely diagnoses, the need for medicines and medical equipment, and the shortage of housing, food and facilities for proper rest and recreation. There is a great need for social and psychological rehabilitation of the victims. Regrettably, no solution has as yet been found to the question of resettling the inhabitants of contaminated districts. We can only overcome these difficulties by working together with you, together with all representatives of the international community who wish to help the victims.

On behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church and all those who have turned to it for help, I call upon you, dear brothers and sisters, to do all in your power to help alleviate the suffering of the victims of Chernobyl. I call for the prompt implementation of the United Nations programmes to mitigate and overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. I ask the Governments of all the countries of the world, churches and religious associations, public organizations and all those who sympathize with our misfortune to help the people whose lives bear the bitter mark of Chernobyl.

Affirming my support for the efforts undertaken by the United Nations with a view to remedying the consequences of the disaster, I thank you all for the concern you have shown for my afflicted compatriots. I pray to the Lord that He may bestow His blessings on your noble work and grant it success.

(Signed) Aleksy II
Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia